Wild Mistletoe

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Wild Mistletoe

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Will took a dislike to Hannibal Lecter as soon as he started working at the school. So stuck up, intrusive and ... gorgeous....

Notes

For the secret santa gift exchange, I hope you like it Mischallany!

Will Graham was not happy.

He had been looking forward to ending the school term and going home, sipping whiskey in front of the fire, and not giving a single damn about school for the next two weeks. And whilst that could still happen, there would be an annoying delay as the headmaster, Jack Crawford, had told him earlier in the day that he was needed to chaperone the school's winter dance. Margot Verger-Bloom's wife had gone into labour almost three weeks early and so she'd had to pull out.

"Come on, Will," Jack had cajoled warmly, "you're one of the few staff without a family to rush home to."

Will had glared at that and muttered something about discrimination before grumbling, "Can't Lecter do it? He doesn't have a family."

“He’s already doing it, Will. As are quite a number of the staff, some of whom *do* have families or other commitments they have rearranged.”

Will had agreed. Of course he had. What choice was there? It was one thing to be an asshole, it was another to be a selfish asshole with no thought of others. So, he found himself in his office, an hour after he had planned to leave, putting on a tie he had managed to borrow from Price in the science department. He had agreed to chaperone the dance, but he didn’t plan on being happy about it.

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Will had to admit, on his arrival into the main sportshall, that he was impressed with the way the kids had decorated for the event. The students on the decorating committee had done a great job and even constructed a little enchanted forest area for photos. Practically theatre quality staging! He remembered some of the kids in his woodwork class asking about something like that - he thought it was for a school play.

Will didn’t realise he was grinning at first, a small lopsided thing as he admired their handiwork and noted the details. He’d have to find out which of them worked on it to make sure they got extra credit.

“Mr Graham,” A voice greeted him, “something amusing?” Hannibal Lecter, had appeared next to him, also looking over the forest setting.

Will’s smile faded immediately and he felt his jaw clench tight.

Hannibal Lecter was someone he very much never, ever wanted to spend an evening with. Absolutely, definitely not. He totally didn’t want to spend time with the man almost as much as he did, and he hated that quite a bit.

Yes, he was devastatingly handsome, suave, gentlemanly, intelligent, even a little mysterious, but it was all totally wasted. Will had known they wouldn’t get along from the moment they were introduced, when Lecter had started as the new biology teacher the last school year.

Will had been teaching at Wolf Trap High for over five years. He’d always enjoyed working with his hands, and after retiring from the police force on account of starting to feel like a pin cushion he had so many holes in him, Will had gone back into the trade his dad had taught him - boat mechanics. Somehow that had lead onto other jobs to fill the time - car mechanic, general handyman work, and then life took a weird turn and he somehow ended up teaching shop and drivers ed at a local high school. He had worked hard for everything he’d ever got in life and he wasn’t especially keen on those who didn’t.

Hannibal Lecter on the other hand was born with a mouthful of silver spoons. That much was clear from how he dressed and spoke. Will heard a rumour that he was actual European nobility! And he wasn’t able to immediately dismiss that idea, he definitely fit the bill. Pretty much the last man on earth Will was going to have anything in common with, even if he was polite and engaging and hot.

Every time Lecter tried to make conversation with him it got his hackles up. A lot of their initial conversations focused on Will's non-traditional route into teaching, which clearly the man judged him on. Half the time it seemed like Lecter was testing him, his knowledge, trying to make him prove himself. It was exhausting and annoying, so after a month or two, Will just started to avoid and ignore the new teacher.

To be fair, he didn't talk much to any of the teachers, or parents… or students. So it likely wouldn't have been noticeable had it not been for Lecter's persistence. It took another month for the man to get the picture and stop trying to sit with him at lunch or make conversation in the staffroom.

Now beside him, admiring the forest, Will was about to reply some snide comment back when the hall doors opened and the kids all started to come in, with their noise and hubbub. The lights dimmed a little and the music that had been playing softly was ramped up, adding to the cacophony.

Will took a moment to centre himself, the sudden noise something that took an adjustment. He couldn't help but flashback to the time he was shot during mardi gras when a bar brawl got out of hand. His shoulder suddenly ached in response and felt a little cold. He knew he'd gone rigid, could feel it in all his muscles, and willed himself to relax again.

"Isn't that Jimmy's tie?" Lecter's voice cut through the noise and his rising nerves, and spiked an ire in Will that only Hannibal Lecter with his perfect face and gravelly voice could induce.

Will narrowed his eyes at the man and his damn judgement, "I do have my own, but I was roped in at the last minute and didn't have chance to go home. This isn't exactly how I was planning to end the term."

Lecter smiled warmly and nodded, "Very kind of you, and it suits you," he seemed to be considering for a moment, as he used to back in the beginning before asking Will another probing question.

Will braced himself for Lecter's questioning, wishing there was a way to escape, but at best he could walk away to another part of the room and hope he didn't follow.

"I wonder Will, why do you teach if you dislike children?" There was a little amusement in his words, and that only made Will feel all the more judged.

"I don't dislike *them* per se, I generally don't like people at all, regardless of age," Will growled, hoping he might get the hint. But if anything that seemed to amuse Hannibal.

"The children seem to like you, in fact they were all very enthused to tell me about the 'bug hotels'," he used air quotes, "you had them working on. Certainly my class on hexapods was more lively as a result."

Will's cheeks heated, and he wondered if the glow there could be seen in the dim lights of the decorated sports hall. He had no idea the kids gave a single shit about the things they did in class when they left, figuring it all went out of their heads the moment they went out the door.

He looked at the little forest scene again and saw it as a testament to how involved the kids really were.

He was lost in looking at it, as the kids all started to laugh and shout and find space on the dancefloor. Only one thing was out of place, a real thing amongst the theatrics - he stared at the hanging foliage.

“Wild mistletoe,” Lecter’s voice rumbled next to his ear and he realised the man had leaned in to be heard over the children. Will startled at both the words and their delivery.

“What?!” It came out louder and a higher pitch than intended.

“The children told me they needed mistletoe,” Hannibal pointed at the small branches of it hanging over and framing the scene. “I suggested wild mistletoe would be better than store bought, so we had a short field trip for extra credit.”

Will wasn’t even sure why Lecter was telling him this. Was he just making conversation or maybe implying that Will would have not thought to suggest wild mistletoe if he had been asked? Lecter was such an asshole.

“I need a drink,” Will responded, wishing for the love of god there was liquor here but knew he was going to have to settle for some sickeningly sweet pop. Before Lecter had chance to reply or invite himself along, Will turned and walked towards the refreshments.

The next couple of hours were barely tolerable. A few of the kids from one of his classes came over and chattered excitedly about the forest, which had been fine. But as he stood between the dancefloor and the refreshments - at the ready to jump in should any of the kids decide to start dirty dancing - it was wearing on him.

Jack came over to chat for a while and asked if he was okay, which made Will realise that perhaps how cold and sweaty he was feeling was more noticeable than he’d thought. Will shrugged it off, saying he was fine and likely doing much better than Alana Verger-Bloom right now.

The music changed to something that was clearly popular amongst the kids, because then there was uproar - raucous shouts of approval and shouting along to the lyrics. Will found himself stumbling back from the dancefloor and hitting into the refreshment table. Not that anyone seemed to notice, thankfully, over the noise of the children.

He felt something in his chest, the start of panic curling around him. He reminded himself over and over he was at school and all was fine, but his brain was already starting to push him towards that irrational spiral.

Then Hannibal Lecter was at his side again, gripping his elbow softly and leaning into him, which felt so good. The bastard.

“Come with me, Will.”

Hannibal lead Will back over to the little forrest, quiet at the moment but for the photographer who had a “back in five minutes” sign next to her equipment whilst she fiddled with lighting and the flash settings.

“Do you have PTSD, Will?”

“No… yes, but only… I used to be a cop. It’s very situational. Loud noises, lots of people. The majority of times I was stabbed or shot at it was noisy and…” He surprised himself by answering the question that Lecter had posed very clinically, as though yet another assessment of whether he was fit for duty.

He shuddered and took a breath.

“Sit here,” Lecter directed, still holding his elbow and guiding him to one of the few chairs up against the wall closest to the little forest setting. It was dark and secluded, partially hidden from the room by the forest.

Will couldn’t help the burst of laughter as he sat. At Lecter’s curious look he explained, “Don’t worry doctor, I’m not going mad. I was just thinking we’re lucky this area wasn’t already occupied by teenagers making out and coping a feel,” he chuckled again.

Lecter took the seat next to him, still looking so prim and proper.

“Is that what teenage Will Graham would have been up to?” Lecter’s tone was curious and his expression amused.

“Hardly,” Will was still chuckling, maybe the nerves of the situation - how close he’d come to having a panic attack. He still felt himself vibrating. “I moved so many times as a kid I didn’t have much chance to make friends let alone ones that would have been up for making out,” Will considered it for a moment. It had been a lonely childhood in some ways, but he’d learned a lot from his dad, studied hard with no distractions and got a scholarship to college in the end. Perhaps it had worked out for the best and anyways…

“Besides, I never knew anyone long enough to trust them enough to come out to them, y’know? Hard to find a guy to kiss you when you don't know which ones are going to beat the shit out of you if you try.” Will chuckled again, but this time it was a tight, harsh sound that he noticed made Lecter flinch.

Or maybe he was flinching at Will’s admission? He thought all the staff knew he was gay?

Ugh

He really didn’t need this.

“I think I should-” Will started to get up, but Lecter placed a hand on his arm and stayed him.

“You should rest a little longer, perhaps avoid the children until they’ve… quietened a bit,” Lecter encouraged.

Will blinked. Was he? Did Lecter just?

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Will growled.

Lecter looked a little taken aback and quirked a brow. He opened his mouth, but before he had chance to speak, Will continued -

“Ugh, I can’t deal with you fuckers who think gay people are perverts. You think I should stay away from the kids?! Like I’d seriously… with the kids…. what the fuc-”

“Will!” Lecter’s voice was commanding, but it was his shocked and horrified expression that stopped Will’s rant. “I was not suggesting… I genuinely meant that you should remain somewhere quiet whilst there is so much excitement going on, considering you’re already feeling a little shaken.”

“Are you a fucking doctor now?” Will snapped, unsure whether Lecter was being honest or just backtracking. Basically unsure whether or not he should feel humiliated and embarrassed by his error or continue to embrace the rage. Either way his cheeks heated.

Lecter looked even more confused now, which - Will realised - was a little odd. The man was usually pretty stoic, maybe the slightest hint of a smile when they caught each other’s eyes in the hallways. But most of the time he was a picture of calm - every time Will watched him from across the staff room or canteen, or if he just happened by his classroom and looked in…

“You know I’m a doctor, Will.” Hannibal replied tentatively, “You said it yourself a minute ago.”

Will tried to remember his words. Had he? Oh yeah, maybe he had when he was being surly and… “I was being sarcastic. I didn’t know you… how are you a doctor?!”

“How were you a police officer?” Lecter countered gruffly, “We all have our pasts.”

They both went quiet for a moment, the look between them not quite a glare.

“You’re just… always so confusing.” Will made his exasperation clear.

“You willfully misunderstand everything I say. Take just a moment ago for example.” Lecter’s voice was deeper now and there was a new depth to his eyes. Will realised the man was angry and it was… damn hot.

Fuck.

“I…” Will had no words, his brain already rerouting like a computer rebooting, trying to recover and replay every conversation they’d ever had. It was difficult to sift those memories from all the others he had of the man - watching his mouth as he ate lunch, watching him bend to pick up the blackboard eraser that had fallen to the floor...

FUCK.

“You formed an opinion of me the moment we met and it has informed you ever since. I tried to be cordial. And when you piqued my interest I tried to capture yours. I thought perhaps

you weren't interested in men, but then I realised you just didn't find *me* interesting."

Lecter sounded resigned.

Will wondered how his face hadn't caught fire, he was blushing so hard his ears were burning at the tips.

"I didn't… you…. you were always quizzing me."

Lecter blinked at him before replying very deliberately, "Will, I was trying to get to know you. It was clear from our very first conversation that you were the most intelligent person in the room, and forgive my being personal, but I find that very attractive."

"What?!" Will was reeling, he wasn't even sure which bit he was querying.

"I see now that I made an even bigger fool of myself than I had realised," Lecter's jaw clenched for a moment and then the calm stoicism was back and Will wondered - wanting to know with a need deep down into his very soul - what this put together man looked like when he climaxed.

Fuck dammit!

Will practically smacked his hand to his face, though thankfully the sound of the *thwack* was lost in the din of the music.

"I didn't… I'm not very good with people…" Will wondered if even the truth could save this situation.

And he did want to save it. It seemed to have escaped his notice how interested he actually was in Hannibal Lecter. He was smart and attractive, and yes maybe not as stuck up as he had assumed. Or he was and it just didn't matter? Wasn't it just Will being as prejudiced as he had assumed Lecter would be!

Then Lecter was getting out of his seat and walking away.

"Wait," Will got up and reached out a hand to his arm, gripping softly, "Lecter wait. I'm sorry, I… guess I… I do find you um…" Will felt the heat from his face travelling around his neck and down to his chest. He let go of Lecter's arm and moved the hand to the back of his own neck, feeling the heat there and wincing.

They stood for a moment, Will looking at his feet. When he finally glanced up he realised Lecter was not looking at him, but above him. Will followed his gaze up to the wild mistletoe that hung in the forest they had accidentally wandered into.

Before Will had chance to think, or overthink, or even overthink that and make all kinds of assumptions, he reached out a hand.

It was tentative, he had no desire to have Lecter - Hannibal - do anything he didn't want to. If he wanted to push Will away he could. But Will hoped he didn't, hoped that for once since the guy arrived, he was reading this all right.

Hannibal didn't resist when Will's hand tugged slightly at his jacket, not enough to pull him forward but enough to suggest it. In fact his eyes met Will's then and he stepped a half pace closer - closing the gap between them.

Will's heart was thundering as he leaned in and felt Hannibal doing the same - Hannibal's hand coming up to the back of his neck, his hand played in the hair at his nape. They leaned in.

The kiss was soft and just the good side of chaste, mouths slightly parted so that they shared a breath. Will shuddered out that breath and then put his own hands up, cupping Hannibal's face now and kissing him again, gently sliding his tongue against Hannibal's as their mouths parted a little more. Hannibal's arms moved down, snaking around Will's waist and keeping him close, the press of their bodies sending a thrill of anticipation through Will.

Part of Will's mind was tugging at him, trying to pull him back from the kiss, but his body was already throwing itself headlong into it and-

There was a sudden bright and startling flash of light.

They both pulled back at the same time, still entwined as they both turned to the source of light.

"Shit…" Will muttered under his breath as they discovered a small group of spectators comprising of a stunned photographer and several grinning students.

"Mistletoe can be deadly if you eat it," A small voice said, before supplying with a giggle, "but a kiss can be deadlier if you mean it…"

Batman Returns?!

Will wondered how much more surreal this evening could get, he prepared himself to turn his attention to the amused children.

"Told you," Will heard one of them say, "I said they'd finally get it together before the end of the year."

"It's a Christmas miracle," a child's soft voice spoke in awe.

Will and Hannibal were completely forgotten then as the children began to argue over whether the *winner* of some apparent adolescent bet had meant the end of the year, or the end of the school year. The photographer was trying to extricate herself before anything got damaged and, as if sensing all kinds of nonsense afoot, Jack Crawford's voice boomed from across the hall telling the kids to quit whatever they were doing and disperse.

"I… really didn't think my evening was going to end like this," Will let out a bewildered chuckle as he waited for Jack to clock them too and reprimand them in whatever way was appropriate. They were, after all, making out at a school disco like a couple of teenagers.

"This is hardly the end, Will." Hannibal muttered against his ear. "We only need be here another hour."

Hannibal's breath was warm and enticing there and Will was sure he was about to nuzzle into Will's neck, but instead he spoke again.

"Can I tell you a secret, Will?" Hannibal asked but then continued without pause, "I didn't expect exactly this, but I cannot claim innocence in your being here tonight."

Will drew back with a frown, waiting for an explanation and his mind clicking into place in the meantime. Hannibal was a doctor, he had medical knowledge and then suddenly Margot's…

"Did… did you somehow make Alana Verger-Bloom go into early labour?" Will was shocked and started to pull away, "Damn Hannibal, don't you know how dangerous-"

"Will," Hannibal growled his name and Will stilled. "Being a medical doctor in a former career, you could make that assumption. However, as I am not a complete monster, as much as I wanted to ensure we were finally in a position to spend time together, I did no such thing. I did however… ask Margot to pretend that Alana went into early labour and then suggested to Jack that you would be the most appropriate replacement."

Will's mouth was hanging slightly agape, his forehead creased in a frown.

"Wha… why would you do that?" He asked. Will wasn't even sure himself whether he meant the deviousness and manipulation, or that he went to those lengths to attempt to spend time with him. Both seemed equally absurd.

Hannibal pulled Will back to him, lips hovering only millimetres apart, "I been trying to tell you all year Will... I find you *very* interesting."

Hannibal kissed him again, soft but hungry. It had Will wishing the next hour could be over so they could get out of the damn school and-

"Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, my office, NOW!"

Maybe this wasn't the time and place? Maybe Will should have been less oblivious and Hannibal less reticent? Maybe none of that mattered now…

Maybe they shouldn't have laughed like school children into each other's mouths, as the headmaster bellowed across the room at them.

But they totally did.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!